CHAPTER XL

THE PERIL OF THE SUBMARINES

WHAT must be the sensation of a man who took a leading part in the direction of this tremendous War and undertakes to recall these events with their horrors-, their perils and their amazing escapes? It is like that of a traveller who revisits dangerous rapids through which once upon a time he helped to pilot a boat without map, without knowledge, and without experience to guide him or any of the crew as to the course of the river, its depths and its shallows, its sharp and unexpected bends, the strength and whirl of its current, or the location of the hidden rocks in its channel.

The stream that had then to be navigated was necessarily one that had been imperfectly explored. In writing these Memoirs I have been walking steadily along the banks from the first speeding of the waters down past the delirious fury of their torrent.

I am now approaching the narrowest and the most threatening gorge in the mad voyage, with one particularly jagged rock right in the middle of the stream and to all appearances barring the way. In the end *sea power* crashed against it and was broken to pieces, but I shudder to think that this experience was almost ours. The submarine campaign proved the ruin of Germany. It